

Dear Pastors and Clerks of Session of the Presbytery of the Cascades,

Nearly two years the Presbytery of the Cascades became a founding member of Common Table (<https://www.commonableoregon.org/>), an interfaith coalition of religious leaders representing worshipping communities in Oregon and the Greater Pacific Northwest. Our members include leaders from Christian (including Catholic and Protestant, mainline, evangelical and LDS), Buddhist, Muslim, Native American, Jewish and Sikh communities.

We, as members of Common Table, have put out a statement with regard to the shared values that we commonly affirm as we make decisions about the potential return to our churches, synagogues and mosques amidst the coronavirus pandemic. There are many competing voices both within the faith community and about the faith community as to when we should return to our buildings. It is important to remember that we never quit being church when we left our buildings. We only shifted how we are church.

We still connect. We still worship. We still study. We still pray. We still are committed to mission. Location does not make a Christian. Faith and practice are the marks of Christian community.

The Presbytery Leadership Commission continues to urge and recommend that our churches follow the guidelines of your governor's office, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the recommendations coming from our own Re-Opening Task Force (<https://www.cascadespresbytery.org/when-will-things-open-up-again/>).

While I have signed onto the Common Table statement representing the Presbytery of the Cascades, I send this to you as pastors and/or Sessions so can also add your name to the Common Table statement. In this time when faith leaders across the country are taking divergent stands on issues related to religious liberty and the common welfare of all we want to make sure that our faith voices are also heard, noted and honored.

You can read the full statement here and add your name to the list of supporters and signers: https://www.commonableoregon.org/reopening-statement?fbclid=IwAR1nvHpPjuA1MNoEbTe7O8kL7_pKZ-EdDVCCfcTBd4QlqslP60zHV5ZvVA

In hope and trust...

Brian

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